





CLI CHÉ 2022-11-18

GILETS JAUNES OR WHERE ARE WE FOUR YEARS LATER

DOCUMENTATION GILETS JAUNES, RIOTS, STRUGGLE

On November 17, 2018, a new kind of movement exploded in the face of many observers and took the trade unions and political parties, who were convinced they had a monopoly on protest, by surprise: the Gilets Jaunes (Yellow Vests) movement.

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Officially 287,710 demonstrators, probably 10 times more, had spread around 2000 traffic circles

across the country, created new spaces for discussion. The demonstrations were heterogeneous, many of them were not used to protesting. We all remember the call of truck driver Ghislain Coutard improvising a rallying symbol, the yellow safety vest. His anger and his genius call "We all have a yellow vest in the car! Put it on your dashboard in front of you all week long. It will be a little color code to show that you support the movement".

In the weeks that followed, a strange phenomenon: we all looked at each other on the streets, as if to count ourselves. And there are many of us... You know the rest: 65 weeks of mobilization, thousands of injured demonstrators and an estimated 1.800 injured among the forces of order. The mobilization was unprecedented, but so was the violent repression.

In 2018 alone, the police fired 19,071 LBD bullets and launched 5,420 rounds of grenade ammunition. Total repression. The victories, unfortunately, are not as numerous. Although the carbon tax has been buried, the list of 42 demands has remained largely unheeded.

The few measures that have been saved at the simulacrum of a citizens' assembly will be further eroded by amendments in Parliament. Not sure that this is what the Gilets Jaunes had in mind when they demanded more direct democracy.

4 years later, most of the initial Gilets Jaunes groups don't exist anymore, but some activists persist and don't hesitate to support other militant collectives. From their chaotic course, let us retain that the Gilets Jaunes movement knew how to show all the old street movements the need to renew the way to mobilize. A lesson still far from being integrated if we observe the success of the last call of the CGT in France...

It would be good not to leave the monopoly of mobilizations to these union organizations again, who usually organize nice demonstrations and then leave. The success of the Sainte-Soline mobilization shows it, we have to fight in a different way. Mobilize people who use different strategies and create cohesion between "peaceful" and "determined" protests. The Gilets Jaunes knew how to blow on the embers of social movements, it's up to us to set things on fire!

Contre Attaque, November 17, 2022

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